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JESUS CHRIST, THE MODEL
OF MANHOOD



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JESUS CHRIST

THE MODEL OF MANHOOD

By the Most Reverend
ALBAN GOODIER, S.J.

ARCHBISHOP OF HIERAPOLIS

Introduction by
WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.
Editor of AMERICA



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INTRODUCTION

PICTURES consist of lights and shadows. A picture which would be all light would not be a picture, and would, in fact, be indistinguishable. It is the shadows which make us able to see it as a picture.

The character of a man is known to us by its combination of good and evil, or at least of excellences and imperfections. If all men were equally perfect, they would be identical; it is the differences between them which make us able to distinguish them, and it is their faults rather than their virtues which greatly constitute these differences; it is the shadows which enable the lights to be perceived by us.

These thoughts suggest the difficulty of presenting to us any distinctly individualized picture of the human character of Jesus Christ. In that character there were no shadows, no faults. As Archbishop Goodier says: "Students have naturally looked for limitations, and have found them not to be there; powers and gifts which in other men do not co-exist are discovered united in him." How then shall one proceed who would attempt to depict him as true man?

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The solution to this problem is to be found in this book. Christ, it is true, "is undefinable; limited though he may be because of his humanity, still we cannot fix the limits; if we try to lay hands on him, if we say that because he is this therefore he is not that, he slips through our fingers and escapes us. No one quality can be ascribed to him as characteristic to the exclusion of another; he possesses them all; the ideal which man of himself cannot so much as reach has been found in him in real life. We live in an age of discoveries, but no discovery of our time has been more momentous, more epoch-making, than this."

That discovery is nothing less than this: This God Man, this Divine Person, in his human nature is Universal Man, and yet he was born, grew, and in his young manhood was killed. He is Universal Man because he had all the excellences of character together which are found only in many men, and yet he was actually the Son of Mary and lived in her home for thirty years. And not only had he all excellences of character, but he had them to a perfect degree, and none of them is found to such a degree in any man.

In the truest sense, therefore, is Christ the Model of Manhood. All the virtues in which many men excel—some of them in this, and

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some in that—are in him perfectly. The almost unbelievable good fortune of man is that this Universal Man, this Model, actually lived, and was no mere figment of a brain. He was indeed the prototype of man, as St. Paul tells us, God's image of what man should be, who was made to the image and likeness of God. This is indeed the mystery of the Incarnation; but the Second Person of the Trinity taking on the nature of man must necessarily be Perfect Man without ceasing to be True God.

It was a happy thought indeed that prompted the Editor of this Series to choose Archbishop Goodier to write on Jesus Christ as the Model of Manhood. Only one who like him combines in himself the theologian and the ascetical director could do justice to such a subject. His strokes are unerring, not only because he is an expert in the lore of Theology and of the Scriptures, but because he also has sounded to its depths the science of Love.

WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.
Editor of AMERICA

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JESUS CHRIST

THE MODEL OF MANHOOD

I. INTRODUCTION

§ I. ENGLAND AND JESUS CHRIST

It is fortunate, it is very much more, that in this country, to the present day at least, whatever vagaries our religion has gone through during the last four centuries, men generally have clung to the belief in the reality and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. England may have broken away from the common faith of Christendom, but she has not yet broken away from the common faith in Christ. She may have split up into many divisions, Catholic and Protestant, Protestant and Nonconformist, Nonconformist and one knows not what, but always there has been a rallying round the Name which is above every name, always there has been a willingness to bend the knee before it. While in other countries history has witnessed the formation of the most determined hostile camps against it, and determined war waged to overthrow it, among ourselves we have had

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little more than individual voices raised, and these for the most part have not known what they did; usually they have uttered little else than echoes of what has been already heard abroad. With all our differences, with all our indifferentism, England has always been, and still is, essentially Christian; even our Modernism, when it finds itself bringing into question the belief in Jesus Christ and what he stands for, looks at itself with not a little unrest and hesitates to draw conclusions.

This is particularly marked in the attitude of the British mind towards the Bible. At times, especially in the nineteenth century, we have been overwhelmed by German learning, or Dutch analysis, or French brilliance; we have indeed produced some kind of imitation of them all; but always in the end we have recovered our feet, and by far our best, certainly our most lasting, work has been done in defence of the sacred text and all that it contains. We have had no Strauss or Renan; we have no Tübingen school; our higher criticism, such as it is, if really our own and not merely borrowed from elsewhere, has gone steadily in favour of the Bible and of our Lord Jesus Christ as he is therein portrayed. If at any time a writer has denied any of its contents, its miracles, or its supernatural element—at least, until

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these days when Modernism has come to shake the foundations of all faith—such a man has been more condoned as an eccentric, or pitied as one prejudiced, or feared as a danger, than followed. He has never formed a lasting school; he has never even founded a new rationalism; his permanent influence on English religious thought has been, almost without exception, virtually none.

What is true of Great Britain in general has its reflection in the British Catholic mind. Before the unhappy sixteenth century, if we may judge from the spiritual literature of that time, our forefathers were marked by a deep devotion to the person of Jesus Christ and his Mother. In those days poets and play-writers gloried in singing for the people the praises or the sorrows of Mary and her Son, or in setting them in all their attractiveness upon our village stages. If we had not ascetics of the same type as Italy or Spain, we had our anchorites and hermits and recluses, who were never tired of repeating the holy Name of Jesus to many tunes. Men went out to battle with the Blessed Sacrament in their breasts, their women stayed at home and worked chasubles and vestments for the holy sacrifice; when there was peace, and leisure for other things, they spent their time and their means multiplying everywhere

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across the land homes for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and dedicating them to his Mother.

Nor is the modern Catholic mind very different; it easily responds to the names of Jesus and Mary. It seems to know them personally; witness its devotion to the Sacred Heart, its ever-increasing love of the Blessed Sacrament, seen especially in frequent communion, in the processions of Corpus Christi, in the practice of the Forty Hours now universal, and, on Mary's side, in the love of our Lady of Lourdes. It is seen in the type of our pictures and statues, in our books, in our hymns; no one who watches the devotion of our faithful in their churches can doubt their conspicuous veneration and love for the sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our poorest and least instructed may be ignorant of many things, but, if their faith has not been sapped by the blight of circumstances, to them Jesus in a real fact, whom they know, and in whose hands they can safely trust themselves, whatever lot this world may mete out to them.

It is therefore with no little relief that, in writing for English readers on a subject of this kind, one feels oneself entitled to set aside for the moment all controversy concerning the New Testament or the Person of Jesus Christ. In doing so we have little fear

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of being accused either of shirking difficulty or of making use of premisses which are unwarranted. From the beginning the destructive schools have found many of their chief opponents among our own scholars; these have done their work so well that it still stands the test of keen attack, and upon it we may rely. To English students as a whole the Gospels are both genuine and credible; if, until this generation, there has been a tendency to err, it has been rather on the other side, the side of over-literality, finding too much in the human words and forms of Scripture, reading into them more than they were meant to contain.

§ 2. THE MODEL OF PERFECT MANHOOD

We may assume, then, the truth of the Gospels; we may assume, as established elsewhere in this series, the reality of Jesus Christ, truly man, truly God; it will be enough for us here to dwell upon the human character of him who is both God and man, and to show how in matter of fact this character has revealed itself to be that of the Perfect man. Indeed, we may limit ourselves still further. It will be enough to confine ourselves to that aspect of his character which concerns us men who follow him; what belongs to him in his higher aspects, as Prophet,

as Redeemer, and the rest, may well be left to another volume of this series, which treat of him as God and Man. Here we look for the Model of Manhood and no more.

Many philosophers in the past, many novelists and poets in more recent times, have attempted to describe for us the perfect man. From the very nature of the case their descriptions have differed one from another while, perhaps, all have been good so far as they have gone, none have been able to include in their description the whole idea of man's perfection. For man is limited and finite; he cannot conceive in his mind an idea which contains in itself the whole scope of perfection, not though his vision confine itself to the plane of nature alone. And even if he could, when he comes to describe it he can do so only in the limited terms of his own imagination and language. He will speak from his own experience of himself especially his own shortcomings, from his knowledge of and insight into other men possibly from the ideal picture which his imagination has conjured up after the sordidness of real life has been eliminated. But in every case it will be his own vision and perspective, his own point of view, which will be expressed; true, noble, complete, perfect in its degree, but nevertheless with the confining limitations and lacunæ which human

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nature cannot escape. In fact or in fiction, in history or in drama, the altogether perfect man does not exist; if he did, if he were in all things and always perfect, he would be something more than human.

So we say, speaking of ourselves and of one another, of all men as we know them, of all men as they have been described by others; the knowledge of this truth leads us to judge not, that we may not be judged, to forgive as we would be forgiven, to see not the mote in our brother's eye, being only too conscious of the beam within our own. Human nature, because it is human nature, is faulty. And yet we are compelled to make one exception. There has lived in this world one Man in whom, if he is taken wholly, no fault whatsoever has been found, who has shown himself in all things perfect, whose accurate picture, moreover, has been handed down for us all to study; the impossible has been done before our eyes. The more closely the portrait is examined, and the more in detail the character is revealed, so much the more is this amazing fact found to be true; and that not only by followers who love his Name, and may therefore be predisposed to see in him "the most beautiful of the sons of men," but by unbelievers also, who would look on him with cold eyes, unenthusiastic in his cause, what they would call unprejudiced and

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scientific, and yet would be honest and sincere. They have scrutinised Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, and have found him to be "the Lamb of God," "the King of Israel." They have listened to and sifted his words, and have acknowledged that "never did man speak as this man spoke." They have weighed all his deeds and have declared that "he hath done all things well." They have compared him with others and have concluded: "We have never seen the like." They have looked for a charge against him and have owned with Pilate: "I find no fault in this just man." They have pierced his heart, and what they have found there has made them confess: "Indeed this was the Son of God."

This conclusion, however vague in its final expression, we may well be justified in claiming as the glorious outcome of the long-drawn battle which a century and more has seen waged round the name of Jesus Christ. Whatever adverse and less enlightened criticism may have attempted in the past, whatever specious science may attempt today, sober scholarship all the world over comes more and more to acknowledge this at least—not only the full fact of Jesus Christ as the Scriptures give him to us, not only that he stands out pre-eminently the greatest man this world has ever seen, but also the further fact that he is so great, so complete, so universally per-

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fect, as to be unique, in some sublime sense more than ordinary man either is, or could be, or could ever of himself fashion in his mind. Students have naturally looked for limitations, and have found none; some have assumed shortcomings, and others have proved their assumptions to be contrary to the facts. They have searched for the shadows corresponding to his established virtues, and have found them not to be there; powers and gifts which in other men do not co-exist are discovered united in him. He is undefinable; limited though he may be because of his humanity, still we cannot fix the limits; if we try to lay hands on him, if we say that because he is this therefore he is not that, he slips through our fingers and escapes us. No one quality can be ascribed to him as characteristic to the exclusion of another; he possesses them all; the ideal which man of himself cannot so much as imagine has been found in him in real life. We live in an age of discoveries, but no discovery of our time has been more momentous, more epoch-making, than this.

§ 3. POINTS OF VIEW

It is not that we have discovered anything we have not known before; fortunately for the world the knowledge of Jesus Christ never

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has been and never can be lost. Rather it is the angle of vision which may be considered comparatively new. From the days of St Paul it has been well understood that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, since he chose to become man, could not but be Perfect Man; since he came for man, for man's redemption and to be man's model, he could not but be man's perfect model. Given the Godhead and the truth of the Scriptures, there was only one light in which those Scriptures could be read by the Fathers and the early Church, and that was "the Light which was the life of men, the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." But in our own time the tendency has been to begin at the opposite extreme; to argue not from the Godhead to the Manhood, but from the Manhood to wherever the argument might lead. It was a course inevitable for those to whom God had come to have little or no meaning, who were therefore compelled to investigate the facts of history as historic facts alone, incapable of being anything more. Since the Sonship of God to them meant nothing, the truth had to be read and interpreted by them in the absence of that guiding light; and though, even in that darkness, the picture obtained of Jesus Christ has been of surpassing human beauty, yet has it fallen

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far short of the whole. By way of contrast and example, compare the Life of Jesus Christ by Ludolph of Saxony, written in the fifteenth century, and the Life by Renan in the nineteenth; the Life by Ludolph still lives, while that by Renan, with all its charm, has been long repudiated, by none more than by his own disciples.

The same tendency has been followed, and seems now to be increasingly followed, by another school. To this school God is indeed a great reality, but it has made so much of the kenosis, the "emptying-out" of the God-made-man, as virtually to assume that Jesus, if he is rightly to be understood, must be studied as being man only, prescinding entirely, or almost entirely, from his divinity. To this school would seem to belong an ever-growing number of English Protestant writers today. To it the Jesus of history must be considered apart from the Jesus of faith; where history records a fact, that fact must be understood as man by his experience understands it and no more. In this restricted light much of necessity has been distorted. Jesus Christ, considered as man and man only, whatever might lie hidden in the background, forced into the mould of other men, has rendered disconcerting conclusions. Many words and actions and events in the Gospels

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have been surrendered; their riddle can only be read when his own full light has been turned upon them. And yet, even to this school, in spite of its assertion of his ignorance, his groping to the discovery of himself, and other limitations put upon him, he stands out as a perfect being, unique, more than man.

But in this simple exposition of the Catholic mind, or rather let us say of one single aspect of the Catholic mind, in regard to Jesus Christ, there is neither room nor need for controversy. Except perchance by way of confirmation, we need not dwell upon the opinions of others. We stand on sure ground, we walk along paths that have long been well-trodden, and from whatever goal men of goodwill set out, they arrive in the end at the same centre. Jesus Christ, being God, is also as Man the Model of Perfect Manhood; Jesus Christ, being Man, is found to be more than man, is found to be what he declared himself to be, the true Son of God made truly man, yet remaining one with the Father. In this way the revelation grew upon those who first learnt to read the Carpenter of Nazareth; when they had read him, then the overwhelming truth took hold of them, and in the light of the Godhead the Manhood became more manifestly clear. Thus does the one truth reflect upon and clarify the other; the Light

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that is the Life of men is the Word made flesh, the Word made flesh is the Light of the world, whose "glory we have seen, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

II.—A GENERAL BACKGROUND

§ 1. A FIRST IMPRESSION

WHEN we read the four Gospels with attention, one thing at least must strike us of their respective authors—that is, the conviction deep down in them all that every word they wrote was true. There is no attempt to emphasize what they have to say, as will one who narrates the naturally incredible, or who is eager to convince either himself or his audience; miracles are told with the same simplicity as other events; in dealing with the central figure they pass from the sublime to the commonplace with disconcerting ease. But in regard to that central figure this has a wonderful effect; it is alive; it walks out of its surroundings and stands apart; it detaches itself, it would seem, from its own generation and walks through all ages, belongs to all time.

Before any attempt is made to draw out the features of this portrait, it will be well, for the sake of a background, to look at the life of Jesus as a whole. Of the earliest phase little need be said: that phase of miraculous promise, of “good tidings of great joy” and

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yet of humble infancy, of that combination of joy and sorrow, adoration and subject helplessness, submission to the Law and yet supremacy, command and obedience, which at once prepares us for the paradoxes, the seemingly impossible contrasts, which mark his whole career. The period closes with his first recorded words: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). They are the motto of his life.

Until he was thirty years of age all we are told is that "he was subject to them" (Luke ii. 51); that "he grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in him" (Luke ii. 40); and that he "advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace before God and men" (Luke ii. 52). At the age of thirty he came down to the Jordan, a sinner it would have seemed among sinners, to be baptized by John. From the Jordan he again passes out of sight into the desert; not only will he be accounted a sinner among sinners, but, like every sinner, he will be tempted even as they.

So completely is this willingness to be unknown and unnoticed a part of his nature, that not until he is revealed by John, and not until some followers of John of their own accord come to him, does he make the least effort to be found. But as soon as they come, then follows a quick response. They are wel-

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comed as dear companions; by mere contact with him they are stirred with an enthusiasm they had never known before; instantly they go away and bring others to him; the fascination captures them all, and they long to be with him always. And he rewards them; he takes them with him into Galilee; before their eyes he turns water into wine; back he comes with them to Jerusalem, and again before their eyes he drives out the buyers and sellers from the temple; they learn from the beginning what he can do, what power over things and men is behind this Carpenter of Nazareth. They have begun in love, they are at once led on to faith and trust.

Nevertheless, so long as John the Baptist is in the field, Jesus is content to bide his time and wait; not until the Precursor is taken and clapped into prison does he show himself before the world. But when that deed is done, then he begins to move. With a daring that defies all opposition, of Pharisees and doctors of the Law, of Herod and all his myrmidons, of ignorant Galilæans and all their prejudices, of dwellers in Jerusalem and all their bigotry, he comes out boldly and proclaims that the Kingdom is at hand, and that he, Jesus, is the messenger sent to found it. From this moment he moves quickly and surely. There is no hesitation in his method, no drawing back because of opposition. His

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own men of Nazareth reject him, and at once he calls others to his aid; the people of Capernaum accept him, and he pours out upon them all he has to give in a very torrent. Pharisees set themselves to catch him in word or deed, and before their eyes he proves his power, not only of healing, but of forgiving sins. This first outburst of authority carries all before him; men look on and ask themselves: "What thing is this? What is this new doctrine? What word is this? For with authority and power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him and go out" (Mark i 27; Luke iv 36). "And all the multitudes were astonished and filled with fear, and wondered and glorified God that gave such power to men" (Matt. ix 8; Mark ii 12; Luke v 26).

Endurance of friends, equal endurance of enemies; forbearance, silent and ignoring, with those who knew no better, encouragement, gentle, cheerful, happy, fascinating, to those from whom he hoped for and expected more; equally considerate to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, sophisticated citizens of Judæa and narrow countryfolk of Galilee, Pharisees and publicans, rulers in the city and lepers on the road, disciples and strangers, believers and harsh critics; intimate with all but depending on none, appealing to them to believe in him, but not despondent if he failed,

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giving all he had to give if they would but receive it, inviting all, refusing none, striking friends and rivals dumb by his lavish and unconditional generosity; and when abused for the gifts he gave, never closing up his hand, sparing himself in nothing, though he knew that the seed he sowed fell on stony or thorn-choked soil; and underneath, like a thundering, awful, underground torrent, a life apart and independent of prayer and spiritual understanding that could not be ruffled by the gales and storms upon the surface—such is an impression of Jesus in the first and most active, yet perhaps the least self-revealing, period of his public life.

§ 2. TO THE CONFESSION OF PETER

So he prepared the ground. Then up on the hill behind Capharnaum, after a whole night spent in prayer—"And he passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (Luke vi 12)—he called to himself his Twelve Apostles, choosing "whom he would himself" (Mark iii 7-19; Luke vi 12-19), and no man should interfere or deny him. It was an act of high command; it was followed by that momentous sermon, the charter of the new kingdom, the challenge thrown down in his own name to all the world (Matt. v 1-7, 29). This again was confirmed by deeds of singular

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mercy: by praise and reward of a pagan's faith (Matt. viii 5-18; Luke vii 1), by singular pity for a widowed mother's tears (Luke vii 11-17), by the befriending of a "woman in the city, a sinner" whom no self-respecting man would touch (Luke vii 36-50), by permitting that women should come with him, to help him in his need (Luke viii 1-3).

And yet it was not all victory. Indeed, at every turn he met with disappointment. Already from the first, by the Jordan in Judæa, suspicion and jealousy had hunted him out; now in Galilee he was not to be left alone. His rivals could not do what he did; therefore must he be proved a deceiver. He went about doing good; therefore must he be stopped: "And they were filled with madness; and they talked one with another, what they might do to Jesus" (Luke vi 11.) He spoke "as one having authority"; therefore he was a blasphemer: "Who is this who speaketh blasphemies?" (Luke v 21). The miracles could not be denied; therefore in them must be found ground for accusation. He did them on the sabbath day, and thereby broke the sabbath (Matt. xii 9-14; Mark iii 1-6; Luke vi 1-11); he did them by no human power, and thereby proved that he was himself possessed: "This man hath Beelzebub, and casteth out devils by the prince of devils" (Matt. xii 24; Mark iii 22).

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And to some extent, as must always be the case, the people were influenced by these insinuations of their leaders. They, too, began to wonder and to doubt. From this time we see him turning more and more away from them, as they turned more away from him. He still has deep compassion for them, for they are lying "like sheep that have no shepherd" (Matt. ix 35-38; Mark vi 6); he still lets them crowd about him, and jostle him in the streets (Mark v 31; Luke viii 45); but he knows that not on them can the Kingdom be founded. He must attend more and more to the Twelve. To them apart from henceforth he gives special instructions (Matt. xiii 11; Mark iv 11; Luke viii 10); for them alone he works special miracles, stirring them to ever more faith (Matt. viii 23-27; Mark iv 35-41; Luke viii 22-25); filling them at once with awe and confidence (Matt. viii 28-34; Mark v 1-20; Luke viii 26-39); before them allowing his simple, childlike affection to appear in the midst of his weary disappointment (Matt. ix 23-26; Mark v 35-43; Luke viii 49-56); endowing them with his own powers and sending them forth that they may learn in practice the work to which they have been called (Matt. x 5-15; Mark vi 7-13; Luke ix 1-6).

They went out over Galilee while he remained at home. They preached; they worked

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wonders in his name; they came back happy men. They came to him like children to one who understood them, and told him all that they had done; they rejoiced with him and he rejoiced with them (Mark vi 30; Luke ix 10). In spite of the gathering of the gloom about him, in spite of the threats and warnings which of late had been coming from his lips, he had not lost, he never lost, that inward peace and fascination and familiarity by which those about him were made glad. Never throughout his life does Jesus lose that trait. If he is roused to anger, the next instant proves that he is always controlled; if he is stung to the quick, however he may show that he feels it, there is never any change in his heart. Once only, at the end, in the Garden of Gethsemani, does the cloud seem to enclose him altogether; but even then his will is bent to the will of his Father, and he can face his death with calm.

The first period, of wonders and success, had led up to the choosing of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount; the second, of reaction, had been marked by the instruction of the Twelve apart from all the rest. He would close it with a new high-water mark. He drew his best apart into the desert; there he fed them, five thousand men, beside women and children; he stirred their zeal till they called him "the Prophet," and would

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hail him as their king; in the plain of Genesareth, by a yet more lavish outpouring of miracles, he deepened the impression; then, when they at last professed their allegiance as they had never professed it before, he gave them the one test of all; he offered them his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink. And at this last moment they failed him; in spite of all they had received, in spite of all they had promised, they failed him. "Many of his disciples, hearing it said: This saying is hard, and who shall hear it?" (John vi 61). And "after this, many of his disciples went back, and walked with him no more" (John vi 67).

Jesus left Capharnaum with a saddened heart; we do not hear that he ever set foot in it again. He had made the one great offer for which all these months he had been preparing, and it had been rejected; the one offer which, had they but shut their eyes to their own questionings and accepted the truth of him that was all true, would have revealed to those men the wealth of power and love and generosity which was within their grasp, and which was more than belonged to any mortal man to give. He left the place; he left Galilee; he went out of the land of the Jews into pagan Tyre and Sidon. For months he wandered abroad, keeping the Twelve continually with him, giving to them in this alien land an utterly new outlook on

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life. Since the mission on which he had sent them through Galilee there had been a long respite: miracles a few, and they were less spontaneous than before; preaching very little, and that with a continued note of warning; avoidance but not fear of his enemies, for when he met them he defied them to their faces; prayer and solitude in abundance; all the time a deepening upon them of personal influence, in familiarity along with dignity, leaving through these hot summer months the seed he had sown to grow within their hearts. More and more he had confined himself to them; at length the time came when their faith, too, must be finally tested.

"And it came to pass in the way, as he was alone praying, his disciples also were with him, and he asked them: Whom do the people say that I am? Whom do men say that the Son of man is?"

They gave him an answer which now concerned him little. Then he asked:

"But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt, xvi 13-16; Mark viii 27-29; Luke ix 18-20).

It was enough; at last by a single man on earth, with the light of the Father from heaven, he had been discovered and owned for what he was. There and then, upon that

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man, the Church of God was founded; henceforth it mattered little what Pharisees or doctors might say or do. His work was now assured; now he could march on boldly to his death.

§ 3. TO PALM SUNDAY

With the confession of Peter the manner of Jesus seemed completely to change. At once he cut short his wanderings into foreign lands. He returned into Galilee; on Mount Thabor, to reward them for their faith, and to prepare them for what was yet to come, he showed to three of them a shadow of his Godhead. For a month or thereabouts he still hung about the upper province. But he seemed no longer to care to preach. He no longer busied himself with miracles; instead he took means to hide himself away, content only with deepening the faith of his Twelve, strengthening them for the great ordeal that would soon now be upon them.

Nevertheless, how little after all did these poor men from Galilee understand! In many places we are reminded of their ignorance, even at this late hour (Mark ix 32); patience and forbearance he had to show them to the end, perhaps more at the end than in the early days of hope and promise. Nor only to his own; he had to show it also to

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his enemies. One might say that the rest of his life is but a continued manifestation of unwearied patience and long-suffering to all who came within its range. On the Feast of Tabernacles he marched again into Jerusalem. Let his enemies do what they would, he stayed there all the time, moving in and out of the Temple as he pleased. He came again for the Feast of Dedication; in the intervals he remained for the most part in the neighbourhood, in Judæa or Peræa, for any of his foes to meet him who chose. The atmosphere is heavy with storm; his death is continually on the lips of men; more than one attempt is made to take him; we need to bear all this in mind if we would understand aright the depth and warmth and all-enduring patience of his last appeals.

"If any man thirst let him come to me and drink" (John vii 37).

"I am the light of the world. He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii 12).

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep" (John x 11).

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me" (John x 14).

"Come to me all you that labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because

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I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is sweet, and my burthen light" (Matt. xi 28-30).

With language such as this Jesus fought his great campaign against his bitterest enemies in Jerusalem, only a few months before he died. It was the forgiveness of "seventy times seven times" put into practice. Such enduring forbearance could never have been invented; the whole story teems with emotion, the man who speaks has his heart full. Incredible bearing of abuse and insult and trickery, understanding sympathy with friends and foes, quick response to any least sign of recognition, fascinating imagery linking his words with all around him, firm, consistent assertion of the truth that seemed to compel belief, exact interpretation of the past, clear and unflinching vision of the future, seeing at once both death and victory, beneath it all peace and assurance and strength in the knowledge and love and intimate union with the Father—all this was evident to all, and portrayed a soul so perfect as to be more than human; his enemies even better than his friends knew what it implied.

With this last cry, one might almost say, the portrait of Jesus for our present purpose is completed. It is strong as a tower, yet

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delicate as a feather; yielding as a blade of grass to every breath of wind, yet firm as a rock before the heaviest wash of water. For the rest the evangelists, among them chiefly St Luke, are content merely to touch in the lights and shadows, all in keeping with this last impression. For instance, soon after this, down the highroad from the city a lawyer asks him what is the great commandment of the Law, and he is made to answer his own question, that it is the love of God and the love of one's neighbour. He asks who is his neighbour, and he is given that perfect story, of the Good Samaritan (Luke x 25-37). It is at this time that we find him accepting hospitality from two simple women of Bethania (Luke x 38-48); at this time that he is found alone in prayer, and by his example makes others long to pray like him (Luke xi 1-13); at this time that he sees a poor, aged woman bent double, and puts unasked his gentle hand upon her, and makes her stand up straight (Luke xiii 10-17). While the enmity about him grows ever more bitter, while he is compelled to become ever more emphatic in his retort, nevertheless precisely at this time, and it would seem precisely in proportion, does his tenderness of heart reveal itself, in the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke xv 1-7), and of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv 11-32), in his weeping over

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the tomb of his friend Lazarus, and his raising him to life (John xi 1-46), in his healing of the ten lepers, and his expression of regret that only one came back to thank him (Luke xvii 12-19), in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii 9-14), in the welcome he gave to the little children and their mothers (Matt. xix 13-15; Mark x 13-16; Luke xviii 15-17), in the love he showed to the young man who fain would follow him: "Jesus looked on him and loved him" (Matt. xix 16; Mark x 17; Luke xviii 18), in the hearty, even merry greeting to the publican Zachæus (Luke xix 1-10), last of all in the defence he made of the woman who poured out upon him of her best (Matt. xxvi 6-13; Mark xiv 3-9; John xii 1-11).

§ 4. TO THE PASSION

That last scene ended all; the rest was but the conclusion of the tragedy. In the triumphant Procession of Palms he told the world that he was its Master (Matt. xxi 1-11; Mark xi 1-11; Luke xix 29-44; John xii 12-19); on the next day, when again he cleansed the Temple, he told the priests and the doctors of the Law that he was their Master, too (Matt. xxi 12-17; Mark xi 15-19; Luke xix 45-48). For two days more he came into their midst and let them gather

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round him; he permitted them to harry him with bickerings and questions, as they had never harried him before; with a power at once noble and crushing he silenced them every one, so that from that time forward they dared ask him no more questions (Matt. xxii 46). Then with an eloquence that is unsurpassed he pronounced upon them their doom (Matt. xxiii 1-39). With that he passed out of the Temple, never to enter it again; on the hillside of Olivet he warned his own of the evil days that would be (Matt. xxiv 25; Mark xiii; Luke xxi 5-36); he retired to Bethania, and there he hid himself away, preparing for the last great surrender.

In what follows, though through it all the character of Jesus is seen as it is seen nowhere else, we must be content to move quickly. It was paschal time, the last of his life, and a place must be found in which he might celebrate it; like the King he was, the Son of David proclaimed on the Sunday preceding, though on other nights he had yielded to his enemies and fled the city, on this night he would choose, for this ever memorable ceremony, a noble mansion in the noblest quarter of the town, under the very walls of Annas and Caiphas, and not a soul should deny him (Matt. xxvi 17-19; Mark xiv 12-16; Luke xxii 7-13). When the hour arrived he would go up with his own, and to

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them alone he would reveal the secret of his heart; this last bequest he would leave to them before he died, the key to all that had gone before, and to all that was to come after.

"Before the festival day of the pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, and that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own that were in the world he loved them unto the end" (John xiii 1).

He sat down with them at table; restlessly he rose and washed their feet; his heart fluttered at the remembrance that in spite of all he was to them, and of all they were to him, one among them would betray him, another would deny him, all would desert him in his hour of need. Still he would not stay his hand; for them he had never before stayed it, he would not do it then. Instead, even to them, even at this hour of utter disappointment, he would surpass himself in generosity. He gave them his flesh to eat; he gave them his blood to drink; he gave himself to them for all time, that they might eat him and drink him when they chose, and, when they chose, give him to be food and drink to others. He gave as only God could give, and that only the God of utter love (Matt. xxvi 26-29; Mark xiv 22-25; Luke xxii 19, 20).

Love and service, mastership and lowly

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submission, we have seen them manifested all through his life, but never more conspicuously than now. Sensitive agony because of desertion, overwhelming gratitude because of the least recognition, sadness unto death because of failure, encouragement because of the certainty of victory beyond all these lights and shadows play upon his soul during all that supper night; but always in the end love conquers, and always to these men, no matter what they may then be, no matter what they may soon do, there is nothing but hope and encouragement, and love and sympathy poured out. They will be separated from him, but let them not mind; he will not leave them orphans, he will come back to them. They will be scandalized in him, but let them not mind; he has prayed for them, for Simon in particular, and all will yet be well. They will be hated by the world, but let them not mind; the world has hated him before them. They will be persecuted by men, to put them to death will be deemed a duty, but let them not mind; he himself has overcome the world, the prince of this world is already conquered.

Even that is not enough. Such consolation is only negative, and Jesus can never stop there. They are his own, he loves them to the end, they must partake of his reward. "With a strong cry and tears" he makes

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to his Father a further claim, and it is based on an argument which no man but he, none but the Son of God made man could make.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John xvii 4).

He had lived a perfect life; the Manhood had corresponded with the Godhead; while other men had to learn: "Forgive us our trespasses," he could with truth say this only of himself, and because of it could ask of his Father what he would. And what did he ask? For himself nothing, for them everything. That these his own should be preserved from evil; that they should be made one among themselves; that they should be for ever one with him; "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii 26).

That was the final goal. We take that last expression of his soul and look back, and in the light of it all the life of Jesus is aglow with a new significance. This is his Kingdom, as he himself esteems it; for this he has laboured all the time; to satisfy his own outpouring love for men, to win their love to himself, to stir within them a love for one another such as mankind has never known before.

III.—JESUS CHRIST, PERFECT IN HIMSELF

§ I. THE HUMAN LIMITATIONS OF JESUS

"It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted he is able to succour them also that are tempted" (Heb. ii 17, 18).

"For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin" (Heb. iv 15).

"Who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence. And whereas indeed he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v 7, 8).

"It was fitting that we should have a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii 26).

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In these and many other passages of the later New Testament we are shown how the real humanity of Jesus Christ, with all its limitations and weaknesses, remained impressed, after he was gone, upon the minds of his first disciples. When the whole picture had been completed, then, and then only, they saw the significance of all its parts. Then at last they realized the meaning of that lowliness and meekness which in his lifetime, especially at the latter end, had tended to be to them a scandal. They understood at last the purpose of the Child lying helpless in the manger at Bethlehem, dependent on the care of a mother and foster-father, flying in fear from his enemies; of the Boy growing up among other boys, "in wisdom, and age, and grace before God and men," at Nazareth, and plying a carpenter's trade; of the Man standing as a sinner among sinners at the Jordan, on that memorable day when they first met him, waiting his turn to be baptized by John.

They knew at last why, like other men, even more than other men, he underwent the fire of temptation; why he hungered and thirsted, and endured fatigue of body, and was weary and slept. They knew why he showed so simply the affections of his sensitive nature, sympathy for suffering on one side, indignation with injustice on another,

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tenderness at one time with weak human nature, at another firmness stern and unflinching, love of friends and denunciation of enemies, childlike expression alike of joy and pain, of gratitude and of disappointment, overflowing thanks when men gave him cause for consolation, grief unto tears in face of loss. Even after he had died, and had risen again, they saw why and how he had been so eager that his own should recognize him once again for what he was, truly man, and not a disembodied spirit; letting them embrace his feet (Matt. xxviii 9), speaking with a plaintive voice that could not be mistaken (John xx 16), eating before them (Luke xxiv 30), bidding them to handle him (Luke xxiv 29-43), coming down to any condition they might lay down in order that they might be convinced (John xx 27).

In another way, again, now that all was over, they saw the complete and perfect human nature of Jesus manifested. It was in his full submission to God the Father. The will of the Father—that was for him the beginning and the end. To carry out that will was his life's work (John v 19), to preach his commission was his allotted task (John viii 28); the mind of the Father was above all things else (Matt. xxiv 36), the wish of the Father was the final goal (Matt. xxiv 39). He would seek no glory but such

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as should redound to the glory of the Father (Mark v 19; John viii 49, xiv 13); upon the Father he would lean and depend for everything. With the Father he would constantly unite himself in prayer (Luke vi 12, ix 18, 28; etc.; Matt. xiv 23), thanking him alike in joy and in sorrow (Luke x 21; John xi 1-46), when things were hard appealing to him (John xii 27), often for his miracles seeking his assistance (Mark vii 34; John xi 38, 41). In all the story of the end submission of the real human will of Jesus to the will of the Father in heaven is continually repeated, from the prayer against his own petition in the Garden (Matt. xvi 39), till on Calvary are heard first the cry of desolation (Matt. xxvii 46), then the last word of all, with which in fullest confidence he gives his soul into his Father's keeping (Luke xxiii 46).

Without any doubt, therefore, Jesus had impressed upon those who had lived most intimately with him the fact of his human limitations. So much was he a child to his mother that she could never speak to him nor treat him as other than her own son; complaining to him when he did what she could not understand (Luke ii 48), putting the needs of others before him (John ii 3), seeking him out when trouble threatened him (Matt. xii 19), when he died claiming

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a mother's place by his suffering body (John xix 25). Neighbours had known him only as the carpenter of Nazareth, and the impression never left them. His fellow-villagers despised him because he was just that, and therefore could not be more (Luke iv 16-30). Publicans and sinners could presume so much upon their acquaintance with him as to invite him to sit with them at table (Matt. ix 9-17); women realized his needs and were glad to follow him and help him (Luke viii 1-3). Crowds could knock up against him in the streets (Mark v 31), could hold him hemmed in among them so that he must needs be rescued from them (Mark iii 21), when he said what seemed to them absurd could openly jeer before him (Matt. ix 24). Friends could blame him when he let himself be hustled to and fro, and say he was becoming mad (Mark iii 21); could warn him against impending danger which his seeming imprudence provoked (Matt. xv 12); could contradict him to his face (Matt. vi 22); even when he was transfigured before them could come to themselves and discover that, after all, he was "only Jesus" (Matt. xvii 8). They could wrangle in his company, forgetting that he was there (Mark ix 33); they could offer him wise counsel as to what he ought to do (John vii 3, 4); they could take it upon themselves to decide who should

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come near him and who should not (Matt. xix 13, xx 31); in his very presence they could complain of those who honoured him in ways which he accepted, but which did not suit their fancy (Matt xxvi 8). If intimacy and familiarity may prove how completely Jesus was a man among men, then on every page of the Gospels we have the evidence in abundance.

§ 2. THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS: (i.) WITNESS OF FRIENDS

To men living so intimately with him, especially to those with whom he dwelt habitually, at whose board he ate, by whose side he slept in their cottages upon the floors, whom he kept with him in all his journeys, it was inevitable that as man he should be well known. What, then, is the account they give of him? We are often told that "No man is a hero to his valet," and by that we are given to understand that familiarity discovers weaknesses even in a hero. Yet what do we learn from the intimates of Jesus Christ? From the day when the sinless John the Baptist acknowledges him to be far more sinless than himself (Matt. iii 17), and pointed him out to all as the spotless Lamb of God, who would take away the sin of the world (John i 36), there is never the slightest

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deviation. Simon, a year later, shows the impression that has deepened in him when he cries: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v 8); and on that occasion, as on so many others, he spoke for the handful of men who had reason to know him best. He chose them apart from all others, and they clung closely to him; he gave them himself as an example, and as such they studied him in every detail; he called them his brothers and sisters, and they were beside themselves with joy. They do his work for him; they are tested concerning their fidelity; others may abandon him, but again Simon sums up the impression of them all: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi 69).

A little later, and it has grown deeper; once more Simon speaks for his companions. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi 16). It is the height of their confession of faith, but it is founded on their knowledge of the perfection of the man of whom they spoke. And there were deeper things to follow; from henceforth they studied him more closely as the model for their lives; "Come to me," had now grown into "Learn of me," and they felt the justice of the claim. They saw his infinite forgivingness, and asked how many times they were to forgive (Matt. xviii 21). They watched

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him often in prayer, and asked him that they might be taught to do the same (Luke xi 1). He told them to forgive as they themselves would wish to be forgiven; he taught them to pray every day that their sins might be condoned; by word he taught them that which he could not teach them by example. The nearer he comes to the end the more are they compelled to remark on the two striking features of his life: on the one hand his bold condemnation of evil-doers, on the other his never-ceasing sympathy for the weak, and the sinful, and the down-trodden, and the condemned. They say very little; after the confession of Peter at Cæsarea, less than others do the Apostles express their feelings and beliefs; but the impression is unmistakable: their Master is the Master indeed, who had the word of God, was the beloved of God, and taught more by example than by precept, and who by his utter truth won all to himself. He was wholly true, he was wholly to be trusted, he was wholly worthy to be loved: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" (John xxi 16).

But if the Apostles said little there were others about them both more voluble and more demonstrative, and the evangelists quote their words and describe their actions with evident approval and delight. In every case it is the homage paid to the utter genuineness

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of their Master that delights them. The learned Pharisee Nicodemus knew to whom he was speaking when he said: "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God" (John iii 2); no less did that poor woman of Samaria, a little later, a creature at the opposite extreme, who after one conversation could go away and say: "Is not this the Christ?" (John iv 29). The Roman soldier in Capharnaum had learnt much of this Jew before he could submit to pray: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof" (Matt. viii 15); as well as the woman, the sinner in the city, before without any conditions she could lay at his feet the whole of her miserable burthen (Luke vii 36-50). When the multitude cried out with enthusiasm, "He hath done all things well" (Mark vii 37), clearly they spoke of more than miracles; it was more than miracles that made the common people of Jerusalem say to one another in the streets: "He is a good man" (John vii 12), and use this as an answer to his enemies, who tried to seduce them.

So we may go on; as the clouds thicken the Light of the world seems only to become more manifest. The mother's heart that cried out in the crowd: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee" (Luke ix 27), proclaimed what a good mother's instinct is quick to

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discern; so too was it with the ever-growing believers in Judæa, who in response to the abuse of his enemies fell back on the evidence of the Baptist, confirmed by what they themselves had seen: "John, indeed, did no sign, but all things whatsoever John said of this man were true" (John x 41, 42). The infants that ran to him and clung about him on the road up from Peræa, and the mothers that so easily committed them to his care (Matt. xix 10-15), the women who gladly entertained him in their homes (Luke x 38), the young men fired at the sight of him to be themselves great and true and noble (Matt. xix 16, xx 20), the publicans and sinners, men who had accepted their fate, but who needed from him no more than a look or a word to find their whole lives changed (Luke xix 1-10), all these and more, coming from so many varied angles, are witnesses more eloquent than any declarations of the crystal clearness of his life.

At the end of all, this is made only the more conspicuous. When remorse compels his betrayer to confess, in the sight of his destroyers: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii 4), they cannot contradict him; tacitly they confess that what he says is true. When the wife of Pilate warns the Roman governor: "Have thou nothing to do with this just man" (Matt. xxvii 19);

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when Pilate himself in feeble self-defence declares: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man" (Matt. xxvii 24); when on the cross the criminal hanging by his side defends him with the words: "This man hath done no evil" (Luke xxiii 41); when, after he is dead, the guard beneath the gibbet sums up all he has witnessed in the sentence: "Indeed this was a just man" (Luke xxiii 47); we know something of the minds of those about him at the moment when of all times in his life it was most essential that he should be thought guilty.

Hence it was that after he had left this earth, when Peter, for the first time, stood before the people of Jerusalem to give his witness, it was natural and easy for him to speak to them of Jesus as "the Holy One and the Just" (Acts iii 14); it was natural for him, before such an audience, to sum up his life in the single phrase: "Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good" (Acts x 38). When later he wrote to his neophytes he could best so describe him: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree"

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(1 Pet. ii 22-24). And again: "Christ died once for our sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii 18).

Precisely the same is the evidence of the other Apostles; they dwell, not upon his wonder-working, not upon his preaching, but upon the surpassing, positive sinlessness of Jesus. Thus St John sums up his Master and his work: "You know that he appeared to take away our sins: and in him there is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; and whosoever sinneth hath not seen him nor known him" (1 John iii 5). The same he puts elsewhere in another form: "My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just" (1 John ii 1). So much does the disciple whom Jesus loved make of the spotless innocence of his Beloved. And akin to it is the single sentence of St James, the "Brother of the Lord": "You have condemned and put to death the Just One: and he resisted you not" (James v 6).

(ii.) THE WITNESS OF ENEMIES

All this and more we have from those who were his friends, who were won by him, or at least were not disposed to stand against

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him. But there were other eyes than those turned upon him: eyes that looked, not merely for any flaw in word or deed, but for any pretext whatsoever, for any show of evidence, whether true or false, which might be turned to his destruction. We find them first in Judæa, their suspicions roused and their machinations working before he has yet begun to move (John iv 1). We find them next in Galilee, early in his public life, combining with Herodians whom otherwise they would have scorned to know (Mark iii 6); later, in Judæa, Pharisees and Sadducees join hands to catch him in any way they can. In the streets of Jerusalem, after their manner, in the hearing of the people, they boldly say: "Thou hast a devil" (John vii 20); "We know that this man is a sinner" (John ix 24); but when they are asked to specify their charge it is shamefully little that they can rake together. Three times at least Jesus challenged them to frame an accusation. "Why seek you to kill me?" he asked them in the Temple court at the last Feast of Tabernacles (John vii 20); and a little later: "Which of you shall accuse me of sin?" (John viii 46). Again in the same place at the Feast of Dedication, four months only before his death: "Many good works I have showed you from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?" (John x 32).

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In the Garden of Gethsemani, when at last they seized him, there is more than rebuke, there is overwhelming evidence in his favour which could not be denied in his simple words: "Are ye come out as it were against a thief with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me" (Luke xxii 52, 53).

In spite of these searching eyes kept incessantly upon him from the beginning to the end of his career, and in spite of the challenge with which he confronted them, what did these experts in duplicity find?

"What sign dost thou show, seeing thou dost these things?" (John ii 18).

"Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus because he did these things on the sabbath" (John v 16).

"Is not this the son of Joseph? And his mother, do we not know her?" (Luke iv 22).

"He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark ii 7).

"Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?" (Matt. ix 11).

"This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner" (Luke vii 39).

"This man casteth not out devils but by

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Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. xii 24).

"How came this man by all these things? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark vi 23).

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John vi 53).

"Thou hast a devil" (John vii 20).

"We know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is" (John vii 27).

"Doth the Christ come out of Galilee?" (John vii 41).

"Search the Scriptures and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not" (John vii 52).

"Thou givest testimony of thyself; thy testimony is not true" (John viii 13).

"Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (John viii 48).

"Now we know that thou hast a devil" (John viii 52).

"This man is not of God, who keepeth not the sabbath" (John ix 16).

"Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner" (John ix 24).

"We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not whence he is" (John ix 29).

"He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear you him?" (John x 20).

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"For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John x 33).

"What do we, for this man doth many miracles?" (John xi 47).

"It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi 50).

"Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold the whole world is gone after him" (John xii 19).

The series wearies us. His enemies themselves were weary of this vain repetition of empty phrases. On the last day of his public teaching they were compelled to change their tactics.

"And they sent to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth. Neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of man" (Matt. xxii 15).

It is no wonder, then, that at the end, when at last they have him at their mercy, they must deliberately seek false witness, they must deliberately garble and twist his words, that they may have wherewith to accuse him even among themselves (Mark xiv 55); before others they must conclude with assumptions they could never attempt to prove: "If he were not a malefactor, we

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would not have delivered him up to thee" (John xviii 30); and after he was dead and buried, and as it seemed could no longer speak, they must still emit their slander: "That seducer" (Matt. xxvii 63).

This, then, was all. Never before or since has any man been subjected to so keen a scrutiny; never has hatred been so watchful, so determined to destroy; and yet this was all. Any trifle would have sufficed, an imprudent word however true, a hasty deed however justified, a look, a gesture that could have indicated a hard or bitter mind; yet not so much as a trifle could be found. Jesus Christ! Weighed in the balance and found perfect, tried in the severest furnace and found to be purest gold!

(iii.) HIS WITNESS OF HIMSELF

But now, upon all this, we have a further evidence, which at once puts Jesus on another plane from that of other men. It is the witness he gives of himself. Whatever else he was, on the evidence alike of friends and enemies, he was true, he was sincere, he was transparently genuine: indeed, it was his utter genuineness that in the end was the final proof to his friends, to his enemies was their despair. As then with others who are true, when he speaks of himself he must be heard.

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And what does he say? Other men and women have been holy; a few by the grace of God have been preserved in simple innocence from childhood to old age, and on that account alone have been treasured as the jewels of our race; but no man, save only Jesus Christ, has dared to claim holiness and innocence as belonging to himself from his very nature. No saint, however confirmed in grace, has ever ceased to own himself a sinner, or to be in constant fear of his own rejection. "I chastise my body," says St Paul, "and bring it into subjection, lest while preaching to others I myself may become a castaway" (1 Cor. ix 27). And more pertinently St John: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i 8).

Very differently, as we have seen, does the same saint speak of Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (1 John i 9); and when he so emphatically marks the contrast he does but repeat that which Jesus, again and again, implicitly at least declared of himself. He came to the Jordan and was baptized with sinners, but not until he who baptized him had expressly proclaimed him to be more sinless than himself (Matt. iii 14). He ate and drank with, and permitted himself to

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be called the friend of, publicans and sinners, but never did he allow, and never did they pretend, that he was one of them (Matt. ix 10). He taught men to pray that they might have their sins forgiven; but it was always in the second person, never did he unite himself with them in that petition. For them he said: "Thus, therefore, shall you pray: . . . Forgive us our trespasses," and in that he included all men; but for himself: "Father, the hour is come. . . . I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself" (John xvii 4, 5).

So in practice does he make a sharp distinction between himself and other men. But he does it also explicitly. In the Sermon on the Mount, in very marked words, he speaks to his hearers: "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children," carefully separating them from himself (Matt. vii 11). By the well of Samaria he says to his disciples: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John iv 34), a first lesson in their understanding of him. Before the Jews in the Temple he is most emphatic:

"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true and there is no injustice in him" (John vii 18).

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"And he that sent me is with me: and he hath not left me alone. For I do always the things that please him" (John viii 29).

"Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?" (John viii 46).

"If I glorify myself my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him: but I know him. And if I say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him and do keep his word" (John viii 54, 55).

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father" (John x 37, 38).

Add to this his words in the Supper room. "The prince of this world cometh: and in me he hath not anything" (John xiv 30).

So he speaks of himself, but his actions are yet more eloquent. In his attitude to evil of any kind he assumes a position which he only could assume who is conscious of being its absolute master. His very name has this significance; it is given because "He will save his people from their sins" (Matt. i 21). He is first announced by the Baptist as "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i 29), as just before he had

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been declared from heaven to be one in whom God "was well pleased" (Matt. iii 17). From the first he is the avowed enemy of sin, who will drive it always before him, will conquer its kingdom, will bid its master begone (Matt. iv 10); never for an instant will he be subject to it or fear it. In whatever form it appears he denounces and defies it (Mark iii 28); in his own name he lays down fresh standards concerning it: "I say to you" (Matt. v 18, etc.). On the other hand, when the guilty soul comes penitent before him, he forgives as by his own right (Matt. ix 2; Luke vii 48; John viii 11); nay more, he hands on to others the power to forgive sins in his own name. Devils declare his independence of them: "What have we to do with thee, thou Holy One of God?" (Mark i 24); they cringe before him and appeal to him, as to one who is wholly their Lord (Mark v 10). John had described him as one whose wand would be in his hand, and who would sift the chaff from the grain (Matt. iii 12); he himself declares that he is the Judge of sinners (Matt. xxv 31), he will reward and he will punish (Matt. xxv 46).

As the end draws near the claim grows ever more prominent. His last days witness, as it were, a struggle in his soul between justice and mercy towards those who offended his Father, but for himself there is never a

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shadow of doubt or fear or apprehension. In the Garden he takes upon himself the iniquity of us all; for man he is "made sin," and as such he suffers. When at last he comes to die he does not, like other men, pray for forgiveness; he prays only that others may be forgiven: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii 34). In him there is no repentance; for him that would be untrue; instead, when another repents, even from the cross, he exercises his prerogative: "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii 43). There is desolation, but there is no remorse in the cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii 46). It is answered by the last word of all: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii 46).

NOTE.—This is not the place in which to discuss at length the question of the sanctity of Christ. For clearly, when we speak of his sanctity, we speak of that which belongs to him as God as well as Man; and here we are concerned with that which belongs to him as Man alone, as the Model of Manhood. We have seen that he did not sin; we might go on to show—were we studying him in all his perfection we should go on to show—that

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he was incapable of sinning: "Holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. vii 26). Nor would that be all. It would remain to be shown that in virtue of the union of the human soul of Jesus with the Word of God, sanctity, holiness came to him as of his very nature; he was not only sanctified by grace, as other men are sanctified, he was sanctified as being the incarnate Son of God: "The holy one which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i 35).

Still there is the more human aspect which we may not omit. If Jesus was made "in all things like to man without sin," then was he like to man in the possession of sanctifying grace. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us . . . full of grace and truth," says St John (i 14); and this would seem to be the meaning of many passages in the first teaching of the Apostles (*cf.* Acts x 38). This explains to us the meaning of St Luke when he says: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men" (ii 52).

IV.—JESUS CHRIST, PERFECT TOWARDS MEN

§ I. AN EXAMPLE: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

“AND it came to pass when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power: and not as the scribes and Pharisees” (Matt. vii 28, 29).

There are points in the story of the Gospels when the figure in the centre seems to rise out from its surroundings, when the reader's vision expands, when in that vision that central figure seems to occupy at once, not only all that period of years during which it lived, but the whole of this world's history:

“Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today, and the same for ever” (Heb. xiii 8).

At one of these points, in a summary such as the present, we may do best to study him; though in consequence many other details may be lost, though we may miss that variety, and universality, and all-embracing sympathy of soul which the whole story portrays, still by so doing we may hope to catch the more

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essential details, from which we may judge of the rest.

Such a point we have at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. It is comparatively early in his public life. Hitherto he has confined himself, for the most part, in and about Capharnaum. By generosity overflowing he has won the hearts of the people; by personal contact he has stirred the enthusiasm of his disciples; now the moment has come for the more formal opening of the kingdom. For an hour or more that morning, on the mountain-side that runs up behind the little town, Jesus has been speaking and the people have listened; they have listened in silence, and the fascination of his words has carried them out of themselves. For an hour or more that single voice has been pouring itself out, and has lifted them above their sordid surroundings, into a world where sorrow has been turned into blessedness (Matt. v 3); has given them new joy and courage in the good tidings that after all they are of some account in the eyes of their Father (Matt. v 16); has freed them from the bondage of the Law, making it a glory to brave things yet harder than the Law had ever enjoined (Matt. v 21); has given them a new understanding of sin, till innocence, and truth, and simplicity, and forgiveness, and loving-kindness, and charity have shone

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out as the real honour of mankind (Matt. v 44); has given the noblest possible ideal for life and character, even the ideal of the Father God himself: "Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v 48); has taught them to pray, to speak to that Father, in terms that can never be forgotten (Mark vi 9); has cut through all hypocrisy and brought to perfect light the genuine truth of the soul (Matt. vi 16); has shown them where absolute confidence can reach, higher than the flight of the birds of the air, lower than the grass beneath their feet (Matt. vi 26); has defined and vindicated true justice, which is also mercy, and equality, and meekness (Matt. vii 1); and though what has been said has ended on a note of warning, still has it been with joy, and hope, and love unutterable in the air (Matt. vii 24).

He has said all this, and he has said it in their own language. Never once has he needed to go beyond their own vocabulary, the vocabulary of that Galilæan countryside, their own ideas, their own surroundings, to teach and to illustrate his teaching; they have caught and understood every word. As on a former occasion, speaking to poor working men at their street corner, he had made use of their patched clothing, their bottles and their wine, to bring home to them the truth

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of the Kingdom (Matt. ix 16), so now he has caught hold of the things about him and them by which to teach them the word. He speaks of their everyday joys and sorrows, (Matt. v 3), the salt of their everyday meal (Matt. v 13); the village perched up there on the hill above them (Matt. v 14); the candlestick in the window-sill (Matt. v 15); their daily conversation with its oaths and loose language (Matt. v 22); their daily bickerings before the local judge (Matt. v 25); their household quarrels (Matt. v 33); the local thief (Matt. vi 20); the local borrower of money (Matt. v 42); the sun now beating down upon them (Matt. v 45); the rain which had but recently ceased for the season (*ibid.*); the pompous display of religion in the streets (Matt. vi 2); their daily toil and their daily wages (Matt. vi 19), carefully stored and hidden away in their money-bags at home, the rust and the moth which were a constant trouble (*ibid.*); the raven at that moment hovering above them (Lk. xii 24); the flowers flourishing abundantly around them (Matt. vi 28); the green grass on the plain with all its rich promise (Matt. vi 30); their food, their drink, their clothing, their need of daily sustenance (Matt. vi 31); the ditch over there between the fields (Luke vi 39); their dogs (Matt. vii 6); their swine (*ibid.*). their fish and

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their eggs (Matt. vii 9); the stones on the hill-side with the danger of snakes and scorpions beneath them (*ibid.*); the gate in the wall hard by (Matt. vii 13); their sheep and the wolves they knew only too well (Matt. vii 14); their vines and their fig-trees (Matt. vii 16); their thorns and thistles (*ibid.*); their fruit trees good and bad (Matt. vii 19); their house of detention (Matt. vii 23); last, down there below on the lake-side, a cottage that has fallen to ruins in a storm, and another that stands secure (Matt. vii 24).

§ 2. THE SPEAKER AND THE PEOPLE

He has spoken to them in their own language. He has said what he has said in the language of their lives. He has seen them in their poverty. He has seen them broken and weighed down by cruelty and injustice and misunderstanding, and has blessed them for it all; he has blessed them for it and has poured soothing oil into their wounds (Matt. v 11). He has listened to them in their heated quarrels, a brother against a brother, and has given them the means of reconciliation (Matt. v 22). He has noticed their proneness to coarse vices and has forewarned them (Matt. v 28); he has heard their loose talk, their ribald oaths, their cursing that has led to other abuses, their rising hatred

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one of another with revenge to follow as an imagined duty, and has pulled them up with a word that has swept all rancour aside (Matt. v 37). He has watched them at their prayer, in their almsgiving, during the fasting season, and has warned them against mere outward show (Matt. vi 3). He has compassionated with them in their daily cares, their anxiety for their daily bread and their daily clothing, their eagerness to horde their daily earnings, their eyes keenly watching the tradesman's scales in the bazaar, and has boldly and assuringly lifted them above it all (Matt. vi 33). He has weighed the love of father and son, of friend and neighbour, and has accurately gauged how far they can be tried (Matt. vii 11). He has gazed on the good workman and the negligent, and has judged the value of their work (Matt. vii 26). He has lived their lives, he is one of themselves, he knows them through and through, their good points and their bad points, and he loves them; in spite of all, he loves them and gives them all this.

And yet on the other side, while he remains but one among them, how much above not only them but all others does he claim to be! With an assurance such as no man, no, not even any prophet before him had ever ventured to assume, he pronounces blessing upon them (Luke vi 22); with the might of a

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monarch he pronounces woe on others (Luke vi 24). He speaks as of his own authority: "I am come to fulfil" (Matt. v 17); "I say to you" (Matt. v 22); "I tell you" (Matt. v 20). Who is this who so speaks of himself? He quotes Moses and the prophets, and sets up himself and his new doctrine as something that shall transcend them all (Matt. v 19). He gives them commands beyond those of the Law, boldly contradicting those of scribes and Pharisees (Matt. v 20), yet promises rewards of which neither Law nor Pharisees have ever dreamt: "Your reward shall be great" (Matt. v 12); "You shall be the children of the Father" (Matt. v 45); "Your heavenly Father shall repay you" (Matt. vi 4). He takes it upon himself to teach all men how to pray, how to commune with Almighty God, and God he boldly calls his own Father and theirs. He speaks of this Father as of one with whom he is personally familiar, tells them of his providence and care for them as of something with which he is intimate, of his mercy as of a characteristic trait, of his perfection as an ideal towards which they themselves as being sons, might hope to aspire (Matt. v 48). He speaks of the Kingdom of heaven as if it were his own, promises it to whom he will (Matt. vii 20), strange things indeed he adds about the value of his word and the

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keeping of it, as if the very being of men and of the world depended on it (Matt. vii 23).

Still with it all there has been no arrogance, no sense of false assumption, not a single word that has not rung true; assurance, yes, and certainty, and dignity, and grandeur of ideal, but no arrogance. Truth has sounded in every word he has said, human truth, the truth that lies at the root of all that is best in man, to which the heart of man instantly responds; bravery in face of trial (Matt. v 11), moral courage to its last extreme (Matt. v 44), which has sent a thrill of honour and glory tingling through the veins of all who have heard him; at the same time a lowliness, a submissiveness, a contentment, a joy in whatever might befall, which has made the most crushed life noble. And with it has gone a gentleness of touch upon the most sensitive of suffering, a compassion that has entered into, and condoned, and lifted up, and made bright again the most downcast and the most sinful; an understanding of the love of friend and enemy, and the extremes to which it would venture; a love of the Father, an unquestioning surrender to the Father, a familiar dealing with the Father as became a well-loved son, a simple reliance on the Father, tender and human as that of any child, even while he

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sat there master of them all, strong as adamant.

Thus inevitably from the words he said did these people come to gaze at and think upon the man who said them. All gazed at him; all alike were drawn to him; none of any kind were omitted. The little children gazed open-mouthed, and under the spell forgot their mothers whose arms were around them (*cf.* Matt. xix 13); the mothers gazed and for the time forgot their children. Old age bent double leaning on its stick looked up at him where he sat upon his stone and was stirred to new life (*cf.* Luke xiii 11); youth with its dreams looked, and was fascinated, and longed to do great things (*cf.* Matt. x 17). Ignorance, stupidity, listened and rejoiced that it heard what it could understand (*cf.* Matt. xiii 11); learning, cleverness listened, and was weighed down with the burthen of thought that it bore away (*cf.* Matt. xix 10). Men in high station came, with intent to test him, and stood before him paralyzed, feeling the force of his every word (*cf.* Luke x 37); crawling men of low degree and stricken down sat on the edge of the crowd, and knew no less that the message was for them (*cf.* Luke xiv 25). Innocent, true souls were there, and came away rejoicing, spurred to yet more truth of life and sacrifice (*cf.* Matt. xx 21);

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guilty souls, shameless hearts, felt their guilt the more, yet through it all were able to brush away the tears of despair, and look up with hope such as they had never known before, and love revived within them, the love that came out from and went back to that Man (*cf.* Luke xv 1).

§ 3. THE PEOPLE AND THE SPEAKER

Who was he? What was he? What should they think of him? How should they describe him to themselves? What portrait of him should they bear away, stamped upon their hearts? They gazed and gazed, speechless and entranced, longing to enter into his soul. They saw the fire of zeal flashing from his eyes, flying from his words like sparks from iron, yet never a shadow fell upon the patience, the patience without limit, revealed in his face. They bowed before the grandeur, the nobility, the fervour for the truth, and for all that was best in men, yet did they recognize the lenient condoning, the gentle indulgence and compassion where they failed. They felt the holiness, the earnestness, the seriousness of purpose that compelled to silence, yet with it all was there a brightness, a gaiety of heart, a cheerful vision, a pouring out of blessing and reward that made all life a sheer joy. They were awed

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by his extolling of prayer, and of self-surrender, as if nothing else were of moment, yet alongside was a knowledge of the active things of life which only experience could have taught. They were lifted up by the sight of a greatness of soul, and of outlook, and of ideal, and of endeavour that might have paralyzed them, were it not for the deep lowliness and union with them every one; that made them feel he was their servant even while he was their Master; and along with him all things were possible (Matt. xix 26), they could do all things in him that strengthened them (Phil. iv 13).

They looked at him and they saw much that lay beneath. There was determination that never looked aside, that never for a moment flinched or hesitated, never bent or swerved, pressing on to a goal straight before it; yet was it ever gentle, ever considerate, ever forbearing, taking poor weakness by the hand, lifting up the fallen, carrying the cripple on its shoulder. There was energy, action, daring to rush forward that carried all before it, yet none the less never losing self-control, always composed, always at peace within itself, a sense of quiet reigning all around it. There was hatred of everything evil, indignation, wrath, condemnation, fire and death, death undying, meted out in fierce anger against it; yet never did a sinner

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feel himself condemned or his hope extinguished, but only knew that forgiveness, and love, and warm pressure to a warm heart awaited him if he would have it. There was a keen sense of justice, justice idealized, justice defended, strict justice without favour, yet was the hand that dealt it out soft and tender and soothing. There was passionate love of truth, truth that feared nothing, truth open and outspoken, to saint and sinner, to selfish rich and to sensitive poor, to men in high places and to those downtrodden; yet for them all an attraction they could none of them resist, a sincerity that forestalled opposition or resentment. He was tolerant and he was stern; he bent to the weakest, yet he stood up like a tower; he yielded, yet he held his own; he was a mountain of strength, yet a mother could not be more gentle; he was lost like a child in the arms of his Father, yet was he ever fully conscious and master of himself. All this was uttered in every word he spoke, was expressed in every look and gesture. Who was this man? What was he? They longed to know him more, and they did not know that the longing within them was the first-fruit of love.

For indeed throughout his address love and love only had spoken all the time. Nothing else could have given such insight into

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the souls of other men; nothing else could have fostered so great a craving to bless, and to give, and to receive back, and to make secure. There was love for the poor, for the meek and lowly, for the sorrowful; love for the hungry of heart, for the merciful of heart, for the clean of heart; love for the makers of peace, and for those who failed to make peace and therefore endured persecution; love on the other side for the rich, and the happy, and the contented, warning them against false security; love for them all, both the motley crowd before him, and the chosen Twelve who stood around the throne where he sat. Indeed, for these last he had special affection; they were his own, the salt of the earth (Matt. v 12), the light of the world (Matt. v 13), the apostles that were to be. For them in particular he had come; he had chosen them, he was living for them, soon he would die for them, and for them would rise again from the dead. With them he would always abide, with them and with all who would have him, the Lover of each, longing for each, speaking to each the same winning words he had just spoken on that mountain-side, the bosom friend of every hungry soul and its complete satisfaction, if only it would come up the hill and look for him, and find him, and listen to him, and lose its heart to him, as he had already lost his

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own to it. In the light of all that came after, it is not too much to say that this was the Jesus Christ men saw as he spoke to them on the mountain-side.

“And it came to pass when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power: and not as the scribes and Pharisees.”

V.—A SUMMARY CONCLUSION

§ I. EQUALITY WITH MEN, YET SINLESSNESS AND TRUTH

IN the last chapter we have been content to look at Jesus Christ as he reveals himself in but one scene of his life. To complete the picture, and to prove its entire consistency, it would be necessary to go through all the Gospels, and to draw out each chapter in at least the same detail. But this would be a work of many volumes; nay, as St John says, "the whole world would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (John xxi 25).

But, instead, can we bring together our impressions of this Model of Perfect Man, so as to distinguish him from other men? Can we say what are his special, individual features? We cannot; intensely individual as he is, easily known and recognized, nevertheless, as has been already said, the more we try to fix him down, to appoint limitations, to declare him to be this and not that, so much the more does he elude us. On the other hand, the more we appreciate and see, the more he grows upon us, till any descrip-

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tion of him seems a mere shadow of the truth, wholly inadequate.

For how shall we define him? We watch him from the beginning coming down from Nazareth to the Jordan, one among a multitude, differing from none; or if there is a difference it has been only this, that he has been so like, not simply to all men in general, but to every man with whom he has come into contact. From that moment to the end on Calvary he has never lost this equality. His office of preacher has not destroyed it, his working of wonders has not set him on a pedestal apart; whatever men, in moments of enthusiasm, have said of him, they have never been able to resist this intimate union and equality of Jesus Christ with every man he has met. They have been struck with awe, yet have they remained familiar; they have proclaimed him a prophet, "the prophet," and have wished to make him their king, yet they have continued to press upon him in their streets; they have called him the Son of God, and almost in the same breath, when he spoke, they have contradicted and corrected him (Mark viii 32).

Nevertheless, by a strange paradox, as the life expands it grows upon us that in one thing at least he has differed from others; nay, in this one point he has claimed for himself an abiding difference. No matter

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how otherwise he has been weak and has been humbled in body and in soul like other men, no matter how much he has been tempted, yet never could friend or enemy, when it occurred to them to search, find in him anything that so much as partook of the nature of an evil deed. He has known sin and its dread significance as other men have not known it; he has hated it as other men could never hate it; he has set himself to destroy it, to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. i 21), as the first great mission of his life; boldly he has invited every man to come to him, that he may remove their evil, and that they may then begin really to live (Matt. xi 28), and no man has accused him, on this account at least, of arrogance.

And this is his next characteristic. Really Man, equal with each and all; sinless Man, the implacable enemy of sin as man's one and only evil; out of these there rises up that utter truthfulness which is stamped on his whole nature, on his every word and deed. Men meet him, and read him through, and know at a glance that in him there is no guile. Women, even of that pitied class that is most bitter and disillusioned, come in contact with him and at once put themselves wholly in his hands. They hear him speak, and though he does not prove or argue, though he asserts on his own authority and

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no more, yet do they know that what he says is true. They watch him, in public and in private, working miracles and submitting to be fed, preaching to the ignorant poor and refuting learned Pharisees, and in everything, with everyone, the most convincing proof of all is his utter genuineness; in nothing is there affectation, or mere show, or double-dealing, or self-seeking, or pose, or sham, or arrogance of any kind. He hates hypocrisy; above all, when it struts and slithers in high places. From first to last, in every circumstance, he lives his life simple and true; when later he claims to be "the Truth, the Way, and the Life," not only is no one found to contradict him, but all listen to him as if the claim he made were in harmony with what they had seen and experienced.

§ 2. UNIVERSALITY: IN UNDERSTANDING, SYMPATHY, WORD, ACTION

Thus, by his meekness and equality with each and all, by his sinless sincerity, by his transparent truthfulness, does Jesus make his way into the hearts and affections of men. The sinless find in him quick recognition and response, sinners no less quickly find in him their cure. The truthful hear in their own hearts an immediate echo to every word he says, an immediate understanding of every

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deed he does; the untruthful, by a kind of instinct, at once recognize in him a mortal and unyielding enemy. But to all alike, enemies or friends, there is always the same understanding displayed, the same open frankness and simplicity. Whatever his enemies may say or do to him, before his face or covertly behind his back, his consciousness of utter truth prevents him from retaliating, from any counter-machinations, from any the least attempt to overreach them, or ever to treat them otherwise than as fellow-men. However his friends may fail or disappoint him, he endures. If one is weak and unfaithful, he will wait for him to rise: "Thou being again converted confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii 32); if those he trusts are not to be relied upon, still will he find cause to thank them: "You are they who have stood with me in my temptations" (Luke xxii 28); if his enemies have their way and do him to death, still will he seek excuse for them: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii 34). No matter who they are, he understands them better than they understand themselves; the timorous he could fill with courage: "Fear not, henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke v 10); the repentant he could fill with the joy of friendship: "Be of good heart; friend, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. ix 2);

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even the unrepentant traitor he could still call "Friend!" (Matt. xxvi 50).

Universal understanding such as this is the mother of universal sympathy. He seems unable to meet a crowd but he "has compassion on them" (Matt. ix 36); whenever the people gather about him, in Galilee, in Decapolis, in Peræa, in Judæa, he must yield to them and give them all he can. And to the fascination of it they respond; among high and low, good and bad, educated and ignorant, young and old, men and women, Jew and pagan, goodwill wherever it is found no sooner comes in touch with him than it knows that it is understood, is met more than halfway, and that on its side it knows him. We sometimes hear of men with what is called a genius for friendship; we see others who look on the power of making friends as the highest ideal of a man. In Jesus such a genius was something immediate; by those who had eyes to see, either he was at first sight known and loved, or he was known and hated.

Nowhere is this universal understanding of and sympathy with men made more manifest than in his teaching. He condescends to the lowest level of life as it is lived about him; he rises to the highest subtleties of the most sophisticated Pharisee. For his illustrations he chooses the experiences of the humb-

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lest cottager (Luke xiv 8), or he follows the millionaire merchant abroad (Matt. xxv 14), and goes into the houses of kings (Luke xvii 20). When it so suits his purpose he uses language which the dumbest yokel may understand (Luke xvi 19), or it will be that which shall confound the most enlightened doctor of the Law (Matt. xix 3); sometimes, with noble irony, he will speak so that while the ignorant can take his words, their meaning is hidden from the wise (Matt. xiii 24). He will rejoice with those who rejoice (Mark vi 31), with those who lament he will break down in sorrow (John xi 33). He will praise (Matt. viii 10), and he will blame (Mark viii 33); he will meekly submit (Luke iv 30), and he will be stirred with indignation (Matt. xii 31); he will appeal (Luke xiii 34), and will threaten (Matt. xxiii 13); he will bless (Matt. xxv 34) and he will curse (Matt. xxv 41); with an ease that can come from no training, his language will express every phase of thought, will respond to every humour, and that with such perfection that all literature finds no parallel. It is not only eloquence, it is utter truth that speaks, and in a manner utterly truthful, with the result that what men hear, unpretending, unaggressive, unpremeditated, spontaneous, is found to be the most perfect oratory, the most per-

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fect use of human language that the world has ever known.

As it is with his words so is it with his actions; in like manner does he adapt himself to all men without distinction. Universal as he is in understanding, universal in sympathy, it is inevitable that in his outpouring of himself he should be no less universal. His miracles are worked for all alike, for strangers as well as for friends, good men and evil, rich as well as poor, deserving and those who had no claim; though he declares himself to be sent "for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv 24), and though his disciples believe that this is his only mission (Matt. xv 23), yet when poor pagans appeal to him he must make exceptions, in Galilee (Matt. viii 13), in the country round Tyre (Matt. xv 28), among the mountains of Decapolis (Matt. xv 29). He gives himself to all who seek him (Matt. xv 32); he dines with any who invite him: now a group of publicans in Capharnaum (Matt. ix 10), now a more fastidious company in Magdala (Luke vii 36), now simple women in Bethania (Luke x 38), now cautious Pharisees in Judæa (Luke xi 37). He is as much occupied with one as with a crowd, whether that one be a ruler in Israel (John iii 1), or a derelict woman in Samaria (John iv 7), or a

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loathsome beggar in Jerusalem (John v 6). At a moment's notice he is ready to receive a willing candidate (Matt. xix 16), or, if need be, he will wait for months and even years (Matt xxvi 50). Time seems to matter little to him, distance is not considered (Matt. iv 23); circumstances that might well make others pause with him are ignored. Men may laugh him to scorn, but he goes on doing good (Matt. ix 24); they may refuse him admission to their village, and he meekly proceeds to another (Luke ix 53). He will live in the midst of struggle (Matt. xxiii 53), as well as in the house of peace (Luke x 38); he is as much at home on the steps of the Temple as with simple people in Bethania. Though he never ceases to be "Master and Lord," yet is he always among men as "he that serveth" (John xiii 13); so much so that by a chance word we hear that he "has not where to lay his head" (Matt. viii 20).

§ 3. STRENGTH AND INDEPENDENCE

On the other hand, this universal understanding, this universal sympathy and familiarity with men, never degenerates to weakness. His utter sincerity, when it speaks, makes men "astonished at his doctrine, for his speech was with power" (Mark i 27); his strength in action makes them ask one

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another: "What thing is this? What is this new doctrine? What word is this? For with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him and go out" (Luke xxi 36). Though at one time the multitudes "pressed upon him" (Luke v 1), "so that he could not go openly into the city" (Mark i 45), yet at another he would so overwhelm them that they "were astonished, and were filled with fear, and wondered, and glorified God, that gave such power to men, saying: We have seen wonderful things to-day; we never saw the like" (Mark ii 12; Luke v 26). Though to his own he is lavish in kindness and service and consideration, though he will seek any excuse to condone their shortcomings, yet when there is need he will rebuke them with a sternness which they can never forget, when they would contradict his prophecies of failure (Mark viii 33), when they were jealous (Luke ix 46), when they would lose patience with those who opposed them (Mark ix 38); when they showed ambition (Matt. xx 20); when they were unforgiving (Matt. xviii 21); when they made little of the devotedness of children (Matt. xix 14).

Thus do his utter truthfulness and simplicity enable him to ride far above every inducement to weak indulgence; they make him immune from any danger of yielding

to false glamour and hollow devotion. They may call him "a great prophet," and he just passes up the village out of sight in the evening twilight (Luke vii 16); they may hail him "the prophet that is to come into the world," and wish to make him king, but he slips away from them all into the mountain for his evening prayer (Matt. xiv 23). His disciples may say: "Indeed thou art the Son of God," but he knows exactly the value of their words, and when at last they have grasped their full meaning. When men cry before him: "Hosanna to the Son of David," he is not deceived; in the midst of their hosannas he sits still, and weeps over the doom that is coming (Luke xix 41).

No less does this utter truth and sincerity make him independent of those who would thwart him. He watches them gathering in numbers about him, and he does not change (Matt. xxi 23); he reads the questionings within their hearts, which they have not the courage to speak openly, and he answers them (Matt. ix 4); what they would conceal among themselves he brings into the light of day (Luke xii 2). They criticize his deeds or the deeds of his followers and he corrects them (Matt. ix 14); to catch him in his speech they ask him subtle questions, and he gives them their reply (Mark xii 13). While he does not conceal his contempt for

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their meanness and their falsehood (Matt. xv 7); while he warns others against the evil of their ways and example (Mark iv 24), none the less does he deal out to them unlimited patience and forbearance; let one of them speak the truth from his heart and at once he is approved and encouraged (Mark xii 32). In all the pictures of the character of Jesus there is no feature more astonishing than this constant, unflinching endurance of his enemies, his constant entrusting of himself into their hands, even after he has been compelled to confute them (Luke xi 17), publicly to denounce them (Matt. xv 12), to put them to shame before their own disciples (Mark xii 15), to defy them in their own court (John vii 28), to call them to their faces "hypocrites" (Matt. xxii 18), to warn the people against their example (Matt. xxiii 2), and his own against their falsehood and deceit (Matt. xvi 6). In spite of all this, he would continue to go to them; to none does he make more fervent appeal; the last days of his life are devoted wholly to them. And they in their turn would continue to come to him; the fascination drew them, they would invite him to sit with them at table (Luke xi 37); at times one or another among them would break out and acknowledge that indeed he was the speaker of truth (Mark xii 32).

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§ 4. PRAYERFULNESS AND OTHER VIRTUES

But to those who lived close beside him it was not difficult to discover the secret of this independence. He was with men and among them, but in a true sense he was not of them; while he lived their life to the full, and "bore their sorrows and carried their griefs" more than they carried them themselves, nevertheless, within him and all about him, for those to see who were familiar with him, there was another life and another atmosphere far more real and far more intense than anything this earth had to give him. It was his life of prayer, and with it as a consequence his constant preference for solitude. His friends soon learnt to respect his hours of prayer in the morning and evening (Mark i 35); when they awoke at dawn and he was not among them they knew where they would find him (Mark i 36). After sunset he had regular places for his prayer (Luke xxii 39); when he went apart to spend a night in prayer (Luke vi 12), they would understand and let him go; if he would take them they would readily go with him (Luke ix 28). Often whole days would pass by, and days would grow into weeks, and he would do apparently nothing. Crowds would gather round him and he would retire from them to pray, up the mountain-side (Luke

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vi 12), or into desert places (Luke v 16); they would become enthusiastic and wish to make him king, and he would fly "into the mountain alone, to pray" (Matt. xiv 23). Or they would desert him and he would not seem to mind; in the morning his friends would find him lost in prayer (Luke xi 1). During all his long tour, extending to months, outside the borders of Palestine there is no record of a single sermon preached or public demonstration made; his time would seem to have been spent in continual prayer. He is at prayer among the hills of Decapolis when the people find him out (Matt. xv 29); it is after prayer, a few days later, that he asks Simon the momentous question: "Whom do you say that I am?" (Luke ix 18).

Such was the fact, which those who lived with him soon understood, and accepted, and in their feeble way aspired to imitate (Luke xi 1), and which this Man of utter simplicity and truth never made an effort to conceal. The atmosphere of prayer, the retirement apart from men, the personal dealing with the Father at all times, these were the features that most struck those who were most with him. God the Father the beginning and the end, and therefore all that came between; the will of the Father, and that alone, giving everything else its significance, every success, every failure, everything we do and are; this

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was his only perspective, and its constant repetition, not so much as a doctrine to be taught, but as a truth to be assumed, runs through his life from first to last. "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke ii 49). "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John iv 34). "As the Father hath given me commandment, so do I" (John xiv 31). "Heavenly Father, I give thee thanks" (John xi 41). "Father, save me from this hour" (John xii 27). "Father, not my will but thine be done" (Luke xxii 42). "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John xvii 4). "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii 46). "As the Father hath sent me I also send you" (John xx 21). The life of the soul expressed in these and many more successive cries is unmistakable.

We must come to an end. Hitherto we have marked certain outlines which may help to distinguish the character of Jesus as it revealed itself among men; when we endeavor to descend more to details, when we ask ourselves what were his particular virtues, we are unable to proceed. He had no one virtue in particular, because he had them all; and he had them in so perfect a balance, so part of his very human nature, that they

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passed by unnoticed among men. And this we say, not because, knowing who he was, the Son of God made man, we believe that it must have been so, but because it is written in the actual portrait of the Man as the evangelists have drawn it out for us. We mark the virtues of other men, and we see them to be reflections of the same in him; we go to the theologians, and we find that what they teach of the virtues finds its best illustrations in his life. Whenever he himself speaks of virtue we know, and the men who listened to him knew, that the model of it all was to be found in him. Thus he enumerates the Beatitudes, and as he does so he draws a picture of himself; in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount he speaks of forgiveness and innocence, of simplicity in speech, of generosity, of forbearance, of hidden well-doing, of prayer, of trust in God, of contempt of earthly things, of mercy in judgment, of fidelity; and all who hear him see him to be a model of all that he demands. He declares himself to be the exemplar for all men, not in this virtue or that, but in that which is fundamental to all virtues: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi 29), and not a voice is raised in protest; the whole tenor of his life is proof enough that what he says is true.

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§ 5. LOVE

But at the last, for to us it is evident even more than it might perhaps have been to those who thronged close about him, the virtue which in him was the source of and the key to all the rest was his unbounded love. Love was at the root of his universal understanding and his universal sympathy; love made him pour himself out on all the world; what attracted men to him, what made "all the world go after him," and that though they did not know it, was the fascination of his love. Love as he taught it was a new thing in the world; love as he practised it has made the world another place, with him and his interpretation of it it became indeed "a new commandment," however ancient might be the words in which it was set. When later the Apostles looked back, and pieced the whole picture together, it was this tremendous love of Jesus that grew upon them, swallowing up all the rest: "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John xiii 1). The memory of this was their abiding consolation and encouragement for all time, both to him that could call himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and to him who could remember that he had one day made a last profession

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of love for his Master and it had been accepted (John xxvi 15).

To illustrate this, even inadequately, it would be necessary to pass again through the whole life of Jesus upon earth; for love reveals itself on every page, consistently the same however different in its manifestation. But on this very account there is no need to say more; if ever in the world love has been associated with the name of any man upon this earth it is with the name of Jesus Christ. When St Paul endeavoured to express him to himself he could only sum him up by speaking of his love (Rom. viii 35-39); when since his time fathers and doctors and theologians and saints have tried to do likewise, they have one and all ended on the same theme. Or conversely, when St Paul speaks of love in detail and would endeavour to describe to the people of Corinth this new power that has come into the world, he can only keep the Model before his eyes; when he has ended, what has he done but portray one aspect of him?

“Jesus is patient
Is kind
Jesus envieth not
Dealeth not perversely
Is not puffed up
Is not ambitious
Seeketh not his own

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Is not provoked to anger
Thinketh no evil
Rejoiceth not in iniquity
But rejoiceth with the truth
Beareth all things
Believeth all things
Hopeth all things
Endureth all things"

(Cf. 1 Cor. xiii 4-7).

True, the description is inadequate; the picture given is rather negative than positive; but as with God we can more easily say what he is not than what he is, so is it in our effort to describe even the human love of Jesus Christ. St Peter, it would seem, can do no better, for he says:

"Christ also suffered for us
Leaving you an example
That you should follow his steps
Who did no sin
Neither was guile found in his mouth
Who when he was reviled
Did not revile
When he suffered
He threatened not
But delivered himself
To him that judged him unjustly"

(1 Pet. ii 21-23).

If St Paul and St Peter can scarcely speak of Jesus and his love in anything but negatives; if the former by the simple thought,

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"The Son of God loved me
And gave himself for me"

(Gal. ii 20),

is struck dumb, how can anyone else in this world hope to describe him or it? It is enough to use the words of Jesus himself.

"Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend" (John xv 13),

and to realize how completely he has fulfilled this in himself, not on Calvary alone, but in every moment of his days on earth, and even to this day in heaven:

"Always living
To make intercession for us"

(Heb. vii 25),

"With us all days
Even to the consummation of the world"
(Matt. xxviii 20).

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